Human Rights

MINORITY RIGHTS

Fact Sheet No. 18

World Campaign for Human Rights

All individuals and groups have the right to be different, to consider themselves as different and to be regarded as such.

DECLARATION ON RACE AND RACIAL PREJUDICE
(UNESCO, 1978)

Is there any country where everyone speaks the same language, belongs to the same race, and shares the same culture, beliefs and traditions? Practically speaking none, is the likely answer to this question.

In the modern world, the common situation is that States embrace a mosaic of people. In most countries, there are majorities sharing a common history and cultural background, and there are smaller groups—the minorities—each with its own characteristics.

Within the frontiers of any country, the peaceful coexistence of different national, ethnic, linguistic or religious groups is an asset—a source of social and cultural enrichment. This is not a dream. Many States have succeeded in reconciling the paramount considerations—equality, non-discrimination, national security, territorial integrity and political independence—with respect and protection for the identity of various groups of their citizens.

However, the coexistence of different groups is not always peaceful. Ethnic conflict can be both violent and destructive, lead to repressive counteraction, threaten the unity of States where it happens, and run the risk of involving neighbouring countries.

And wherever the rights of minorities are denied, universally accepted human rights will be violated.

Internationally, human rights standards have been established which cover all individual human beings—the members of minority groups as much as others. In addition, in its action to promote and protect human rights, the United Nations has on many occasions taken a stand on specific cases of minority rights.

Yet the setting of standards which would create additional rights and make special arrangements for persons belonging to minorities and for the minorities as *groups*—although a stated goal of the United Nations for more than 40 years—has made slow progress.

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In recent years, there has been a perceptible sharpening of interest in the problems of minorities with, as one consequence, a quickening of international action to define, establish and protect their rights.

This Fact Sheet summarizes the work that has already been done or is in progress—principally within the United Nations—on the question of the rights of minorities, which are best studied under two broad headings: non-discrimination, and special rights and special measures.

Prohibition of discrimination

Discrimination which takes the form of less favourable treatment of minorities—politically, socially, culturally or economically—persists and is a major source of tension in many parts of the world although it has been repeatedly condemned in international agreements to which all members of the United Nations subscribe.

The United Nations Charter, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations in 1948, establish non-discrimination and equality of treatment as rules of international human rights law.

Two International Covenants—on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and on Civil and Political Rights—both adopted by the United Nations in 1966, deal with these issues in greater detail.

Non-discrimination also features in a number of specialized international agreements and declarations. These include:

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (United Nations, 1965);

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (United Nations, 1979);

Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion or Belief (United Nations, 1981);

Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989);

Convention concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation (ILO Convention No. 111, 1958);

Convention against Discrimination in Education (UNESCO, 1960);

Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice (UNESCO, 1978).

Non-discrimination is also established as a general rule in regional human rights instruments. These include the European Convention, the European Social Charter, the Declaration regarding Intolerance—A Threat to Democracy (all adopted by the Council of Europe), the American Convention on Human Rights (Organization of American States), and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Organization of African Unity).

In covering the grounds on which discrimination is not permitted, these international agreements and declarations deal with most if not all situations in which minority groups and their individual members may be denied equality of treatment.

Particularly important safeguards from which individual members of minorities stand to benefit are recognition as a person before the law, equality before the courts, equality before the law, and equal protection of the law, as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Thus, the principle of equal treatment for *individual* members of minority groups is widely acknowledged although—without counting the extreme cases where discrimination is a matter of national policy and social practice—the reality leaves a great deal to be desired.

Where there is much less agreement is in the field of special rights and preferential treatment for minority *groups* designed to place them on an equal footing with the majority population.

Special rights and special measures for minorities

The prevailing view when the United Nations was founded after the Second World War was that if individual human rights are properly protected, special provisions for the rights of minorities are not needed.

The United Nations Charter does not mention minorities. A draft treaty for the protection of minorities submitted by Hungary to the 1946 Peace Conference in London was not accepted. Proposals to

include a provision on minorities in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights did not succeed.

However, the issue of minority rights was not put aside. The United Nations established the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities—a body of independent experts—in 1947, as a subsidiary organ of the Commission on Human Rights, and the General Assembly in a 1948 resolution stated that the United Nations could not remain indifferent to the fate of minorities. This resolution nevertheless highlighted the difficulty of adopting a uniform solution to "a complex and delicate question which has special aspects in each State in which it arises".

Before outlining what has already been done and the work in progress internationally on the protection of minorities, one point needs to be emphasized: special rights do not amount to privileges. Special rights are a form of positive action, granted to make it possible for minorities to preserve their characteristics and traditions, and are just as important in achieving equality of treatment as non-discrimination.

Only when minorities are able to use their own languages, run their own schools, benefit from other services they have themselves organized, as well as take part in the political and economic life of States can they begin to achieve the status which majorities take for granted.

International instruments

To this day, no single international instrument covers comprehensively the rights of minorities. Some important agreements, nevertheless, give members of minorities the opportunity to express and preserve their cultural, religious and linguistic characteristics.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1966, is particularly significant. Article 27 of the Covenant states:

In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language.

The Human Rights Committee, a body of independent experts which monitors the observance of the Covenant, has given opinions on a number of communications submitted by persons complaining of violations of Article 27.

Other international agreements which have a direct bearing on minority rights issues include the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (United Nations, 1948), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (United Nations, 1965), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989), and the Convention against Discrimination in Education (UNESCO, 1960).

States which ratify or accede to any of these agreements undertake to bring national laws as well as administrative and legal practices into line with their provisions.

The Declaration of the Principles of International Cultural Co-operation (UNESCO, 1966) also relates to the rights of minorities where it states that each culture has a dignity and value which must be respected and preserved, every people has the right and the duty to develop its culture, and that all cultures form part of the common heritage belonging to mankind.

Studies and reports

The protection of minorities has been the subject of several studies commissioned by the United Nations since the 1960s. The first—a study on the rights of "persons belonging to ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities"—was made by Francesco Capotorti, a member of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.

In his final report in 1977, Mr. Capotorti recommended that full use be made of the procedures available under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to implement its provision on minorities (Article 27), and that there should be means at the national level to deal with violations of rights of members of minorities established under this Article. He also proposed the drafting of an international declaration on the rights of members of minorities.

Another member of the Sub-Commission, Asbjørn Eide, was entrusted in 1989 with the preparation of a report on national

experience regarding peaceful and constructive solutions of problems involving minorities. He submitted a preliminary report on the issue in 1990 and a progress report in 1991. Claire Palley, also a Sub-Commission expert, submitted a paper in 1989 on ways and means of facilitating the peaceful and constructive resolution of situations involving racial, national, religious and linguistic minorities.

Declaration in preparation

The idea of preparing an international instrument on the rights of persons belonging to national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities was taken up by the Commission on Human Rights, which set an informal working group—open to all its members—to work on a draft presented by Yugoslavia. In 1985, Jules Deschênes, a member of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, submitted guidelines to help in the drafting of the declaration as far as the definition of the term "minority" was concerned.

The working group, reconstituted annually by the Commission, gave a second reading to the draft of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities in 1991.

Among the rights of minorities to be promoted and protected, the working group has included in the draft declaration the rights to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, to use their own language, and to establish and maintain contacts with other members of their group, as well as the right to leave any country—including their own—and to return to their country.

The draft declaration calls for positive action by States to promote and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of persons belonging to minorities, especially in the fields of teaching, education, culture and information. States are also required to protect the existence and the national or ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity of minorities.

The working group has emphasized that the declaration would not affect the international obligations of States where they concern persons belonging to minorities, nor prejudice the enjoyment by all persons of universally recognized human rights and freedoms, nor condone activities which run counter to the sovereignty, territorial

integrity and political independence of States or contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Persons belonging to minorities should, the draft declaration states, respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of others. They should enjoy the right to participate in the affairs of the States, and in the making of decisions concerning the regions in which they live.

The text of the draft declaration was approved by the Commission on Human Rights at its forty-eighth session (see annex III) and is now awaiting approval by the ECOSOC and adoption by the General Assembly.

Investigations and advisory services

There are cases where independent experts appointed by the United Nations to investigate and report on the human rights situation in specific countries and on thematic issues such as religious intolerance, find themselves face to face with violations of minority rights. The conclusions and recommendations of these special rapporteurs are published and debated, bringing the issue to international attention and serving either as guidance for the governments concerned or as a means of pressure to ease or eliminate the problems they have highlighted.

In the advisory services and technical assistance offered by the United Nations Centre for Human Rights, governments may seek aid in improving the situation of national minorities. These services include the provision of experts to help in the drafting of laws, the organization of national and regional training programmes, workshops and seminars, and the granting of fellowships and internships.

Regional approaches

In Europe, the elaboration of minority rights has been further advanced than elsewhere in the world. The Concluding Document of the Vienna Meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) in 1989 established far-reaching minority rights, both non-discriminatory and of a special character. These rights were

reaffirmed at the CSCE Copenhagen Meeting in 1990 and the Geneva Meeting of Experts in 1991. The Charter of Paris, signed by the CSCE Heads of State in November 1990, dealt among other questions with the problem of national minorities, and expressed a determination to promote their rights.

A list of minority rights was drawn up by the European Commission of Democracy through Law, created by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, in May 1990.

Role of non-governmental organizations

International non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play an important part in promoting and protecting human rights. They are—either directly or through their national affiliates—close to situations of conflict, economic and social distress and tension. They are frequently involved in mediation, and they are able to sensitize international as well as national public opinion when the rights of minorities are neglected or violated.

Through research, the publishing of reports, and by serving as channels and platforms for oppressed groups on the one hand, and by providing timely and factual information to intergovernmental bodies on human rights problems on the other, NGOs open a new dimension in international relations. This has already had a significant impact on understanding of, and action to deal with, minority human rights issues.

Defining a minority

What is a minority? In principle, it is important to have a universally-accepted definition because the protection of minorities against discrimination and persecution is one of the oldest concerns of international law. And laws often require a definition of the beneficiaries. However, efforts to define "minority" in a way satisfactory to all have so far been unsuccessful.

The search for a universal definition of "minority" claims less attention now than in the past, but the debate has served to clarify many of the issues involved.

The difficulty lies in the variety of situations in which minorities exist. Some live together in well defined areas, separated from the

dominant part of the population. Others are scattered throughout the national community. Some minorities base a strong sense of collective identity on a well remembered or recorded history, while others retain only a fragmented notion of their common heritage.

In certain cases, minorities enjoy—or have known—a considerable degree of autonomy. In others, there is no past history of autonomy or self-government.

Although it is difficult to bring together in one generally satisfactory definition all the minorities in the world in need of special protection, there is a commonly used description: a national, ethnic, religious, or linguistic group different from other groups inside a sovereign State.

There are also other criteria that, taken together, cover all minority situations:

Numbers. Minorities, obviously, must be numerically smaller than the rest of the population which constitutes the majority. However, there can be situations in which no group constitutes a majority, and a minority must be large enough to develop its own distinctive characteristics. It goes without saying that no minority—even the smallest—should suffer mistreatment or discrimination of any kind, and that its members must enjoy the protection of general human rights provisions of the law.

Non-dominance. A minority group must be in a non-dominant position to require protection. There are dominant minorities which do not require protection. Indeed, dominant minorities violate—sometimes very seriously—the principles of equality, non-discrimination, and the expression of the people's will as set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Differences in ethnic or national identity, in culture, language or religion. Minorities have stable ethnic, religious, or linguistic traits which are not those of the majority of the population in a State.

These characteristics, however, can also be applied to groups which are not true minorities: migrant workers, refugees, stateless persons, other non-nationals.

People in the latter categories are protected against discrimination by the general provisions of international law. They have additional rights guaranteed in, for example, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their

Families; the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons; and the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. There is also a Declaration on the Human Rights of Individuals Who are not Nationals of the Country in which They Live.

It is generally agreed, in any case, that the members of a minority group must be nationals of the State in which they live.

Individual attitudes. Members of a minority have two ways of expressing their identity. One is to be associated with a strong desire of the group to preserve its characteristics. This sense of solidarity usually stems from the fact that the group has kept its distinctive character over a long period of time. Once the existence of a group or community with its own ethnic, religious or linguistic identity is established *vis-à-vis* the population as a whole, the members of the group express solidarity and a common will to preserve their distinctive characteristics.

The second form of self-identity is to exercise the choice to belong, or not to belong, to the minority. Some individuals may prefer to be assimilated into the majority population. That is their right, and obstacles should not be put in their way—by the minority group or by the majority.

Minorities and indigenous peoples. It is generally considered that indigenous peoples, unlike minorities, are the original inhabitants of the land on which they have lived from time immemorial.

The way ahead

The body of international law which can be applied to minorities has shown a welcome development in the past two decades. The field of non-discrimination is well covered in international conventions and declarations and some special rights for minorities are already to be found in international human rights instruments.

New human rights standards for minorities are under discussion, and the volume of national legislation on the subject is growing. Further evidence that minority rights are a live issue is provided in reports by governments to international organizations, in the studies by special human rights rapporteurs, by the work of NGOs, and by academic research.

There is also evidence that much remains to be done. Many minorities are subject to grave and persistent violations of their basic rights. Long experience has shown that neither oppression—applied in

defiance of international law—nor neglect of minority problems provides a basis for relations between groups with different characteristics in the same country.

Assimilation has sometimes been attempted, but it has often failed; the drive to preserve identity is strong and it applies as much to minorities as to nation-states.

Although minority problems change in their scope and external manifestations with the passage of time, there is no reason to believe that the groups concerned, or their claims, will disappear, unless positive action is taken.

The experience of countries where a majority of the population lives in harmony with one or more minorities shows that this action takes the path of recognition of minority rights, and includes the means to ensure that these rights are respected.

Ideally, the special rights and special measures which are needed to safeguard the identity, heritage and dignity of minorities take several forms:

The right of minority groups to exist;

Enjoyment and development of culture and language;

Establishment and maintenance by minorities of schools and other training and educational institutions, with control of curricula and teaching in their own languages;

Guarantees for political representation in the political affairs of the State;

Granting of autonomy to administer matters internal to the groups, at least in the fields of culture, education, religion, information, and social affairs, with the means, through taxation or grants, to fulfil these functions.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I

Complaints procedures

The United Nations has confidential procedures which may be used by members of minority groups who consider that their human rights and fundamental freedoms have been violated. The main avenues are:

"1503" procedure
("a consistent pattern of violations")

Established under Resolution 1503 of the United Nations Economic and Social Council. Communications which reveal situations affecting a large number of people over a long period are received by the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.

"Optional protocol" procedure

Established in an Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Human Rights Committee may receive and consider communications from individuals who claim that their human rights have been violated by the State.

Elimination of racial discrimination

Individuals or groups who claim that their rights as set out in the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination are being violated may write to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, asking that their complaint be considered.

Further information on the use of these procedures (including their limitations) is given in Human Rights Fact Sheet No. 7 *Communications procedures*. This publication also mentions other avenues of complaint concerning human rights violations created by the United Nations, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

ANNEX II

Additional readings on minority rights

Alfredsson, Gudmundur. Equality and non-discrimination: minority rights. Council of Europe document (H/Coll(90)6).

Capotorti, Francesco. Study on the rights of persons belonging to ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. Human Rights Study Series No. 5 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.91.XIV.2).

Eide, Asbjørn. Possible ways and means of facilitating the peaceful and constructive solution of problems involving minorities. Progress report submitted to the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities at its forty-second session (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1990/46).

——. Preliminary report submitted to the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities at its forty-third session (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1991/43).

Palley, Claire. Possible ways and means to facilitate the peaceful and constructive resolution of situations involving racial, national, religious and linguistic minorities. Working paper submitted to the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities at its forty-first session (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1984/43).

Working Group on the rights of persons belonging to national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. Report to the Commission on Human Rights at its forty-seventh session (E/CN.4/1991/53 and Corr.1).

ANNEX III

Draft declaration on the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities*

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming that one of the basic aims of the United Nations, as proclaimed in its Charter, is to promote and encourage respect for human righs and for fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion,

Reaffirming faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small,

Desiring to promote the realization of principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as other relevant international instruments that have been adopted at the universal or regional level and those concluded between individual States Members of the United Nations,

Inspired by the provisions of article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights concerning the rights of persons belonging to ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities,

Considering that the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities contribute to the political and social stability of States in which they live,

Emphasizing that the constant promotion and realization of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, as an integral part of the development of society as a whole and within a democratic framework based on the rule of law, would contribute to the strengthening of friendship and co-operation among peoples and States,

Considering that the United Nations has an important role to play regarding the protection of minorities,

Bearing in mind the work done so far within the United Nations system, in particular the Commission on Human Rights, the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities as well as the bodies established pursuant to the International Covenants on Human Rights and other relevant international human

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* As approved by the Commission on Human Rights at the forty-eighth session (resolution 1992/16 of 21 February 1992.)

rights instruments on promoting and protecting the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities,

Taking into account the important work which is carried out by intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in protecting minorities and in promoting and protecting the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities,

Recognizing the need to ensure even more effective implementation of international instruments with regard to the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities,

Proclaims this Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities:

Article 1

1. States shall protect the existence and the national or ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity of minorities within their respective territories, and shall encourage conditions for the promotion of that identity.

2. States shall adopt appropriate legislative and other measures to achieve those ends.

Article 2

1. Persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities (hereinafter referred to as persons belonging to minorities) have the right to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, and to use their own language, in private and in public, freely and without interference or any form of discrimination.

2. Persons belonging to minorities have the right to participate effectively in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life.

3. Persons belonging to minorities have the right to participate effectively in decisions on the national and, where appropriate, regional level concerning the minority to which they belong or the regions in which they live, in a manner not incompatible with national legislation.

4. Persons belonging to minorities have the right to establish and maintain their own associations.

5. Persons belonging to minorities have the right to establish and maintain, without any discrimination, free and peaceful contacts with other members of their group, with persons belonging to other minorities, as well as contacts across frontiers with citizens of other States to whom they are related by national or ethnic, religious or linguistic ties.

Article 3

1. Persons belonging to minorities may exercise their rights including those as set forth in this Declaration individually as well as in community with other members of their group, without any discrimination.

2. No disadvantage shall result for any person belonging to a minority as the consequence of the exercise or non-exercise of the rights as set forth in this Declaration.

Article 4

1. States shall take measures where required to ensure that persons belonging to minorities may exercise fully and effectively all their human rights and fundamental freedoms without any discrimination and in full equality before the law.

2. States shall take measures to create favourable conditions to enable persons belonging to minorities to express their characteristics and to develop their culture, language, religion, traditions and customs, except where specific practices are in violation of national law and contrary to international standards.

3. States should take appropriate measures so that, wherever possible, persons belonging to minorities have adequate opportunities to learn their mother tongue or to have instruction in their mother tongue.

4. States should, where appropriate, take measures in the field of education, in order to encourage knowledge of the history, traditions, language and culture of the minorities existing within their territory. Persons belonging to minorities should have adequate opportunities to gain knowledge of the society as a whole.

5. States should consider appropriate measures so that persons belonging to minorities may participate fully in the economic progress and development in their country.

Article 5

1. National policies and programmes shall be planned and implemented with due regard for the legitimate interests of persons belonging to minorities.

2. Programmes of co-operation and assistance among States should be planned and implemented with due regard for the legitimate interests of persons belonging to minorities.

Article 6

States should co-operate on questions relating to persons belonging to minorities, including exchange of information and experiences, in order to promote mutual understanding and confidence.

Article 7

States should co-operate in order to promote respect for the rights as set forth in this Declaration.

Article 8

1. Nothing in this Declaration shall prevent the fulfilment of international obligations of States in relation to persons belonging to minorities. In particular, States shall fulfil in good faith the obligations and commitments they have assumed under international treaties and agreements to which they are parties.

2. The exercise of the rights as set forth in this Declaration shall not prejudice the enjoyment by all persons of universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms.

3. Measures taken by States in order to ensure the effective enjoyment of the rights as set forth in this Declaration shall not *prima facie* be considered contrary to the principle of equality contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

4. Nothing in this Declaration may be construed as permitting any activity contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations, including sovereign equality, territorial integrity and political independence of States.

Article 9

The organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system shall contribute to the full realization of the rights and principles as set forth in this Declaration, within their respective fields of competence.

Human Rights Fact Sheets:

No. 1 *Human Rights Machinery*

No. 2 *The International Bill of Human Rights*

No. 3 *Advisory Services and Technical Assistance in the Field of Human Rights*

No. 4 *Methods of Combating Torture*

No. 5 *Programme of Action for the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination*

No. 6 *Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances*

No. 7 *Communications Procedures*

No. 8 *World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights*

No. 9 *The Rights of Indigenous Peoples*

No. 10 *The Rights of the Child*

No. 11 *Summary or Arbitrary Executions*

No. 12 *The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination*

No. 13 *International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights*

No. 14 *Contemporary Forms of Slavery*

No. 15 *Civil and Political Rights: The Human Rights Committee*

No. 16 *The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*

No. 17 *The Committee against Torture*

No. 18 *Minority Rights*

Notes

The *Human Rights Fact Sheet* series is published by the Centre for Human Rights, United Nations Office at Geneva. It deals with selected questions of human rights that are under active consideration or are of particular interest.

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